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The Sunday School Question

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THE SUNDAY SCHOOL QUESTION

EXAMINED BY

DR. G. A. TROTT

A REVIEW OF THE TRACT BY

W. F. LEDLOW et al.

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The Sunday School Question.

CHAPTER I.

Such is the title of a little pamphlet, the product of ten of the supposedly strongest writers in the brotherhood; men well known for their ability to use trenchant English in polemic combat, but as yet only modest debutantes in the role of humorists.

No man, however, possessing even the slightest sense of humor, can read this little book without realizing that Mark Twain has ten very dangerous rivals in the field of humorous fiction.

The man who can read it through without a smile needs to be treated for facial paralysis.

They are double victors in the literary arena, having in this last venture as justly earned the cap and bells, as by their former efforts the laurel crown.

The subject is divided into sections, each writer devoting himself to one particular phase of the Sunday School question, Brother Warlick being assigned the division entitled "Classes in the School."

Brother Warlick's first scriptural authority (?) for such division is found in the account of creation, concerning which he remarks: "God did not try to do all this in one day; neither did He undertake to create and form all things together—He classified His work in proper order." It is now in order for some one (with no ability

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to see a joke) to ask: "But what has all that to do with dividing the children into five or six classes, under separate teachers, on the same day and in the same room?" Of course everyone knows that a man of Brother Warlick's logical acumen could never intend such an illustration to be taken seriously. It is just one of his side-splitting jokes. Now, if God had divided the work of creation among five angels, all creating at the same time, one marshalling his animals in one corner, another producing birds and fishes in another corner, still another making trees and herbs in another corner, etc., with God as superintendent, creating man in the center, we would have a very good working model of a Sunday School lacking only the lady teachers, because, so far as we know, angels have no sex.

Brother Warlick says: "This was especially emphasized later, when the time for making the tabernacle in the wilderness came. It will appear very clearly when you read the story in the book of Exodus, that Jehovah had Moses to arrange one part at a time." Any one not appreciating the fact that Brother Warlick is just funning, would infer from this that he did not teach his Sunday School classes all at once, but followed his model by arranging one part at a time, *i. e.*, teach just one class a day. Brother Warlick's next argument is as follows: "When the Savior fed the five thousand upon the loaves and fishes, He had them divided into classes of 'fifties' (see Luke 9:14). God knowing how limited was man's ability to learn, was very accommodating in revealing to man His will. He gave 'here a little, and there a little, line upon line and precept upon precept' " Ah! yes, just so, hence the division of children into classes according to their "ability," just as the five thousand were divided into classes of "fifties"

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according to their ability (ability to eat, of course) the old toothless ones who had to "gum it" in one class, just with bread and a little water to soak it in, those with strong teeth and tough throats who could chew up bone and all, in another class, and those who were afraid of bones, in another class, whose fish was boned for them. Beautiful, beautiful, beautiful, and oh how funny. But we must not spend too much time in laughing.

CHAPTER II.

I trust no one will surmise that I am making any argument against the Sunday School, for I am not. I am merely examining some of the so-called arguments in its favor. I have offered nothing in rebuttal for two reasons: one is that nothing has been put forth that would justify one in taking it so seriously as to call it an argument; and the other is that it would seem too much like swatting an infant with a baseball club. I do not mean either, that Brother Warlick is habitually to be considered infantile in a controversy, for he is a veritable giant when defending the word of God. It is only when he is contending for something that has absolutely no scriptural basis whatever that he shows weakness, and descends from the pedestal of a Boanerges to the cheap stage of religious vaudeville.

Brother Warlick, in this role, next introduces the following: "When the Savior would have men to preach the gospel in all the world, He chose a particular class, and gave them the great commission. Unto them He said:

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"You shall be witnesses unto Me in Jerusalem, in all Judea, then in Samaria, and from thence to the uttermost parts of the earth." Here the Lord observed order, suiting Himself. He divided the world into classes that they might be more effectively taught His word." Now, show us anything more screamingly farcical than that, if you please. Of course, if we are to conceive of this as the real attempt at argument of a rational man, to justify the division of people into classes for a Sunday School, we must believe that prior to the carrying out of that great commission, all those to be taught were gathered in a great common assembly (as the people gather at the house of worship on Lord's day), and then at the tinkling of a bell or at the command of Peter, "Teachers will assemble their classes, as the hour for Sunday School has now arrived," John gathered the infant class at Jerusalem, Sister Priscilla took a lot of little girls, over somewhere in Judea, and went to teaching them, James took his class over to Samaria, and Barnabas, Silas, Philip and a host of others just scattered all over the face of the earth. Does anybody feel like smiling? Well, if Joe's Sunday School classes were all as far apart as Jerusalem and Samaria, instead of being in the same room, the Sunday School problem would be settled. Brethren, just pause and think how silly a theory must be to need bolstering up by such misapplications of scripture as these. The next dig Brother Warlick makes at our funny bone is with Acts 13: "It was necessary that the word of the gospel be preached to you first (speaking to Jews), but seeing you put it from you and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, we turn to the Gentiles." Jews one class, Gentiles another, hence scriptural authority for division

of the Sunday School into classes. You may laugh without fear of offending Brother Warlick, brethren, for surely he could never expect anyone to read such stuff as that with a straight face. But Brother Warlick knows well all the tricks of the author and speaker, and hence, understands the dramatic effect of working up to a climax, therefore, there is always something funnier and more mirth-provoking just ahead. If you think there could be nothing more absurd, you are mistaken. "Cheer up, the worst is yet to come." For instance this: "In several epistles written by the apostles, and to individual christians (Timothy and Titus, for instance), the inspired men were careful to show by what they wrote, and the way they wrote it, that some of their statements were applicable only to the persons addressed. Some things Paul wrote to the Romans would not apply to the Corinthians.

* * * Paul said some things to Timothy for his individual use, and unless one is found to be in the same condition Timothy was in, the language would not apply." But you ask: "Does Brother Warlick really mean us to infer from this that we here find authority for separating the children into classes under separate teachers?"

Why certainly, Brother, that is where the laugh comes in. He actually does, with all the appearance of sober earnestness make just this claim. Hear him: "This, of itself, is enough to show that we may divide into classes according to the ability and capability of the people, those whom we try to teach." Well, now of course, hereafter, brethren, we will naturally expect Brother Warlick to be consistent, and when he goes to a community to hold a meeting, he (knowing God to be a God of order and the Author of class teaching) will first proceed to find how

many of his hearers are of the Roman class, and how many of the Corinthian, Timothy and Titus, and all the other classes, and divide his classes in an orderly way, with Brother Chism preaching to one, Brother Ledlow to another, Brother Phillips to another, etc., etc., all under the same old brush arbor at the same time. Ha, ha, ha! wouldn't that make your ribs ache? Yet it is the only logical outcome of this labored effort on the part of one of our best preachers and most noted debaters. Of course, Brother Warlick will never again be guilty of so inconsistent a thing as getting up in the old-fashioned disorderly way, and just, all by his lonesome preaching to an audience of five hundred people of perhaps a hundred different degrees of ability and knowledge, and making an assault upon them with a sermon filled with things addressed to Romans, Corinthians, Thessalonians, Colossians, Timothy, Titus, Philemon, etc., etc., ad infinitum, and depend on each class appropriating what belonged to them.

Oh no; that was the good old apostolic way, but Brother Warlick has seemingly sought out many things the apostles never knew, and we may well look for him to put into practice his more excellent way.

CHAPTER III.

"A little nonsense now and then, is relished by the wisest men," but there seems to be a superfluity of this commodity in Brother Warlick's attempt attempt to justify the Sunday School classes. He realized that the majority of readers would see the pointless sophistry of his

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contention and so he endeavors to anticipate them thus: "But some one may object, and say, 'While the different letters were written to different churches and individuals, each letter was addressed to all at the same time.' This may be true, and yet the point lost. In fact, even then the persons addressed are divided into classes." And Brother Warlick goes on to show, from Eph. 6 and Titus 2, what a number of classes Paul divided his audiences into, viz.: children, fathers, servants, masters, aged men, aged women, young women and young men, and we must not forget that this is set forth as authority for dividing into classes just such as we will find in the Sunday School in Dallas, when we visit Brother Warlick in his home congregation. Well, here comes the irrepressible desire to laugh again, because Brother Warlick's practice is such a comic commentary on his contention. He admits that these classes were not in the Sunday School, but in the churches, addressed by Paul as concrete bodies. These classes of Paul become the model for Brother Warlick's Sunday School classes, and yet he refuses to carry out Paul's example, and implied command, by dividing his audience into classes when he reads these things to them. Of course, Brother Warlick is too logical to ever read these things in an assembly again until he has first divided them up into classes, in different parts of the house—little children, fathers, servants, masters, old men, etc., etc.—each in their own particular class. Yum, yum, won't it be sweet when Brother Warlick gets this all in operation, after the true apostolic order, and we can see the model after which he says his Sunday School is fashioned, and by its side the Sunday School which he has fashioned according to this pattern?

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Get your pattern church in operation as soon as possible Joe, for I am going to pay the way of the Georgetown congregation to Dallas to see the apostolic pattern and the Sunday School patterned after it, side by side, so they can look on this picture and then on that and go and do likewise.

Joe certainly does appreciate wit, even when the joke is on himself. If he didn't he never would have perpetrated a huge practical joke like this on himself. Brother Warlick (evidently with a smile way up his sleeve) says: "Who is foolish enough to think that the lessons here given to the young women will apply to the older ones?" Well, who, indeed? Yet I have never seen or heard of one of the ten great authors when edifying the church with one of their fine sermons, containing this same diversity of teaching, divide the young women from the older ones, and have a different preacher address them separately for fear one might hear something which applied to the other. But furthermore, I am moved to laugh again at the discrepancy between his pattern and the thing supposed to be modeled after it. His constant plea for these classes is, that there is an entirely different lesson given to each. Have I not just shown how he hooted at the idea of the young women having the same lesson as the older ones, and makes that the very gist of his argument for the Sunday School classes? Yet, if you will go into his Sunday School and examine the classes and literature there, you will find each one with the self-same lesson. You go to a class of young men and see that the lesson they are studying is the friendship of David and Jonathan, you peep over the shoulders of the young ladies, and the lesson is the same; you go through the entire school and

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every school and each single class is studying the self-same lesson, yet his reason for these classes is that Paul addressed entirely different lessons to different individuals. Did absurdity ever go to a greater length? Should I ever become a hobby rider (which God forbid) may the angels defend me from bestriding this ramshackled, ragged-edged, rough-hewed, and dilapidated Sunday School hobby, which Brother Warlick seems to be trying to ride through the bewildering mazes of a horrible dream.

After all, I fear I may have unwittingly done some injustice to Brother Warlick's intentions, for, until I got nearly to the end of his article I verily thought he was trying to prove that the scriptural way to teach children is by the Sunday School class method, but lo and behold, here is his conclusion of the whole matter: "Many other scriptures might be referred to, but I deem these sufficient to show that nothing criminal is done, when we divide into classes those who assemble on Sunday to be taught, and to learn what the Bible has to say to them." So after all, the best Brother Warlick hopes to do is to escape the charge of absolute criminality. Well, brother, you ought to heed the Lord's admonition and "Shun the very appearance of evil." I must say your looks, and the appearance of your steed, and all the circumstantial evidence are mightily agin ye, but I'm willing to forgive you if you will quit your hobby and promise to do so no more. And now I can't write any more just at present for laughing. Ha, ha, ha! he, he, he! Just to think of Joe S. Warlick, the victorious hero of more than a hundred debates, pleading so earnestly in the bare hope of escaping the verdict of a criminal. Well, well, well!

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CHAPTER IV.

I have now examined all of Brother Warlick's jokes but one. His last and best, is this: "The fact that God ordained the appointing of elders in each congregation, and provided for the work of deacons as well, ought at least to suggest to the one slow to learn, that certain work should be done by certain ones in the church, and that instructions to those certain ones apply peculiarly to them." Why sure, brother, ha, ha! but where have you shown in all your ambiguous, round-about rhetoric, that any of these instructions, "applying peculiarly" to the "certain ones," authorized anybody to institute a Sunday School, and divide it up into five or six classes in order to teach it? Have we any history, sacred or profane of those elders or deacons, who were appointed, instructed, and carried on their work under the supervision of the apostles, ever doing anything of the sort, or even hinting at it? Just think of it, brethren, who read this, I have now presented you, item by item, every attempted argument Brother Warlick has made. The dividing into classes is one of the most crucial points in defending the Sunday School, and hence, I suppose the preeminence of Brother Warlick, as a debater of wonderful renown, naturally led to his selection for this post of duty, where he has made one of the most brilliant and laughable failures I ever saw. The cream of his logic (?) is of a quality which would surely produce limburger cheese if churned. After all, I can not help fearing that Joe is hiding the light of his wonderful acumen under the bushel of his

modesty, or perhaps his fear of being accused of plagiarism. I say this, because, if we accept his premises, we have several proofs (?) of his contention much stronger than any he has adduced, as I am willing to let readers judge. For instance, since Brother Warlick's strongest and most pathetic plea is, that the addressing of different individuals, in the same letter, constitutes indubitable apostolic authority for Sunday School classes, I have wondered and wondered and wondered why he did not turn to Luke 3:10-14, and triumphantly show us, what we have all this time been asking for, to-wit: the first, or *ancient* Sunday School. We find John the Baptist its superintendent, and he had four classes; the coat class, the meat class, the publican class, and the soldier class. These fill all the conditions of Brother Warlick's ideal, for to quote his very words: "The people are divided into classes, and a lesson given to each particular class"—see? Perhaps we might even infer (if we were as anxious to sustain an unscriptural theory as Brother Warlick is) that Sister Martha taught the meat class, as she was particularly given to culinary affairs, and Sister Dorcas presided over the coat class, since she was a maker of garments, while Matthew, as a matter of course, would be put over the publican class, and the centurion over the soldier class. Now, it seems to me there is Brother Warlick's logical starting point, and from thence he could have run his line of Sunday School succession in a good old way. John was the first Sunday School teacher; John baptized Jesus, which made him a Sunday School teacher, and Jesus sent out the apostles, hence they were all Sunday School teachers, etc. Sounds familiar, doesn't it Joe? At first glance it seemed to me (as doubtless it may appear to

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others) very egotistical for me to improve on the work of such a giant as Brother Warlick, but after all, upon careful deliberation, I am convinced that it is only a shade more presumptuous than Brother Warlick's attempt to improve on the example and teaching of the apostles. In looking over Brother Warlick's jokelets, I find I was about to do him an injustice, and rob our readers of one laugh, for I find I overlooked one of his points (?) after all, which would have been simply awful. He makes the Jews and Gentiles one of his examples for Sunday School classes. Of course, when we inspect this model we find that it merely provokes a laugh at Brother Warlick, for unfortunately there never was but one class in the school after all. When the Jews were taught the Mosaic law, they were all by their lone selves, and when they were taught the gospel it was the same, for when the Gentiles were admitted into the school, the "partition was broken down," and God "put no difference between us and them," and so there was only one class after all, which seems just a little like God wanted those He taught in one class, and was opposed to Brother Warlick's idea of dividing the students into a number of classes; doesn't it now, for a fact? And now having laughed at the ludicrous ineptness of Brother Warlick's sophistry, and almost collapsed with mirth at his frantic efforts to grasp at a straw which was never there, we find that he has really reserved to his final words of solemn warning, the most excruciatingly funny quip of them all. Some writer has said that the most perfect type of humor consists in presenting a palpable absurdity, in the guise of a commonplace fact. Brother Joe seems to have caught the idea right off the bat. Just listen, if you please: "But I must

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say, that for the man who is contentious at this point (Dividing the Sunday School into classes.—T.) I have a kind of sympathy, that I try always to show to children, * * * I have graver apprehensions of such persons going off into innovations than I have of those men who are willing to reason. (And accept such stuff as Brother Warlick has put into this article as reason, see?—T.) When the digressive gets hold of the man who has a dwarfed mind by reason of the fact that his reasoning faculties are kept impaired by prejudice (Wonder what's impaired Joe's reasoning faculties?—T.) he has the speech just suited to the case, and very often takes him off, upon the principle of 'one extreme following another.' Such a person, from habit, swings from one extreme to another, so he is usually in a good condition to be swayed by the fair speeches of the deceiver." Now, brethren, the show is over, so far as Brother Warlick's part is concerned, so you may just hold your sides and laugh as long as you wish. I'll venture to say Joe grinned himself when he wrote that, seasoned old humorist as he is. You have it now in a nutshell, the farther you get away from the digressives, the surer they are to catch you, and if you will get as close to them as you can you won't be in much danger. If you hope to escape the bogy man, you must snuggle up to him. I guess that is the principle on which Brother Warlick is defending the Sunday School, now. At least, we need never have any fears of Brother Warlick in future, for if we see him drawing nearer and nearer to the enemy's camp we will know he is just doing it to avoid capture. This would be a most peculiar philosophy if we didn't know it was just one of Brother Warlick's jokes. Brother Warlick clinches this new and original

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stunt in burlesque by quoting a well known old saw. He says, "This is true on the principle that 'an idle brain is the devil's workshop.' " Well, Brother Warlick's brain must have been excessively idle about the time he conceived the notion of writing this article on "Classes in the School," don't you think?

We will now wipe the tears of hilarity from our eyes, and turn our attention to some of these other co-laborers in comic literature, wondering if they can hold the pace that Joe has set. So bye, bye, Joe, the joke is on you, and you might just as well laugh. If you do, we'll laugh with you, and if you get angry and cry, we'll laugh at you.

CHAPTER V.

Since the division of those taught into classes is the chief cornerstone of the Sunday School, this review might well be considered to have completely demolished the whole fabric, when it had shown the preposterous absurdity of Brother Warlick's assumptions, but that nothing may be lacking to convince even the warmest advocates of that institution of its utter unscripturalness, I will briefly notice some of the other writers.

Whether from lack of Brother Warlick's native Irish wit, or an over regard for some semblance of coherence, I wot not, but be the cause what it may, the humorous aspect of this strictly comic production is not nearly so apparent in the work of the other nine authors. In his introduction, Brother W. K. Rose says: "Where the

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church continues to systematically teach the children on Sundays when they are come together, they will remember their Creator in the days of their youth, before habit binds them with a strong chain, and grow up to be useful and good men and women."

To all of which we utter a hearty, amen! The Jews did this by taking their children with them to the worship, conducted just as God ordained it, for old and young gathered in undivided assemblies and taught by a single teacher at a time, supplementing this with daily instructions at home. The parents of Jesus accomplished the same purpose, in the same way for the child Christ, and the same method of instruction was deemed all sufficient for centuries after the death of the apostles. It is a most significant fact that ten of the most prominent writers in the Texas brotherhood have combined their efforts in defense of an institution, and not one of the ten even attempts to show that God ever taught in a similar way in any age from the creation of the world to the 15th century after the death of Christ. Did the patriarchs do it? Did the Jews do it? Did the early christians do it? Truth compels them to answer, No! Then why do they try to bind these unscriptural methods upon the church today? In the next sentence we see a gleam of humor almost equalling Brother Warlick. Listen: "One can scarcely understand how some parents, who profess to be christians, prefer to have their children take a course in the "Street University" on Sunday, or to join the "Sunday Rabbit-Hunting Club," rather than go with them to church, where the Bible is studied and taught by those who meet to break bread on the first day of the week."

If that wouldn't stir a wooden Indian's risibilities, what

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would? Can we refrain from laughing when we remember the facts as they actually exist, as follows:

1st. Sunday School advocates as a rule do not *take* their children "with them to church," but *send* them to Sunday School.

2nd. *Usually* the Sunday School is dismissed before the church breaks bread.

3rd. The *one hour* usually devoted to Sunday School would not very seriously curtail the sessions of the "Street University," or the "Sunday Rabbit-Hunting Club."

4th. In my travels, visiting the sick, I have an excellent opportunity of observing those who patronize the "Street University," and the "Sunday Rabbit-Hunting Club," and I find that a very large majority of them are Sunday School scholars.

5th. The parents who keep their children with them at home, until they all go together to the house of worship, and then continue to keep them under their eye and supervision during the balance of the Lord's day are the ones who will most surely counteract the evil influence of the "Street University," and the "Sunday Rabbit-Hunting Club."

It will be unnecessary to follow Brother Rose further in his illogical misrepresentations, or nonsensical foolishness. He knows, and every one knows, that there is no true christian that does not contend with all his heart for the vital necessity of teaching children the word of God, constantly, persistently, and systematically. The only difference being that we think God's system, as revealed in the Bible, is the best, while Brother Rose and others think man has invented something better. Nothing proves the truth of this charge more conclusively than his own illus-

tration. "If you would see a typical home of an ancient Israelite, you could read the word of God on the posts of the house, on the gate, on the hands and frontlets of its inmates. Besides this, God commanded them to teach their children His commandments diligently sitting in the house, or walking in the way each night and morning." (Deut. 6:7.) Now I contend that if Brother Rose will only stay with the word of God, and his own chosen illustration therefrom, and will have the word of God on the posts of his house, on the gate, on the hand and frontlet of its inmates, and will furthermore teach his children God's commandments diligently *sitting in the house or walking in the way*, he will no longer have to depend on a Sunday School as a counter attraction to keep his children out of the "Street University" and the Sunday Rabbit-Hunting Club."

CHAPTER VI.

It is now in order to examine what Brother R. L. Whiteside has to say anent "Robert Raikes and the Sunday School." He very strenuously contends against the idea that Robert Raikes was the originator of the Sunday School, and so far as I am concerned, I have no desire to blacken the memory of any man so long dead, and if Brother Whiteside can truthfully lay the blame on any one else, I am ready to rejoice in behalf of Raikes, and sympathize with the other fellow. I note, however, that the New Standard Encyclopedia, from which Brother Whiteside quotes, the American Universal Cyclopedia,

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Chamber's, and all others with which I am familiar, lay the onus of the modern Sunday School on Robert Raikes. As I said, however, I have no interest in foisting this innovation upon Raikes or any other man, and, besides, if I understand correctly, Brother Whiteside and his collaborators repudiate the *modern* Sunday School and wish to distinctly impress upon us the fact that it is the *ancient* (?) institution for which they are earnestly contending. Therefore we will journey along with him in his search for the *ancient* Sunday School, adopting for our motto Brother Whiteside's most excellent admonition: "Let us deal honestly with the facts of history." Does Brother Whiteside deal honestly with the facts of history and with the word of God? Let us hope he at least *thinks* so, for fearful will be the reckoning for any one who does not. Brother Whiteside's first assertion is that "The Jews had such a system of teaching in connection with their synagogues." He does not present us with a scintilla of evidence, sacred or profane in support of this remarkable statement, probably because he could not do so and "deal honestly with the facts of history." We honor him for his seeming desire to conform to his motto, but would have honored him still more if the love of his theory had not prompted him to make an assertion for which he was unable to give a particle of proof. If the "facts of history" had not been against him, we believe he would have produced them, so we will have to reject his synagogue schools as evidence. Next he says: "Even in the days of Ezra, people were taught in classes, otherwise so many could not have been taught at once. (Neh. 8:1-9.)" Now, to be honest with this scrap of divine history, let us collate the

facts. We find that the congregation was gathered together "as one man," therefore they were not separated into different classes. There were a good many others besides Ezra engaged in teaching those people, but with honesty towards God's word and the "facts of history" permit us to say there was not the slightest resemblance to a Sunday School such as Brother Whiteside is defending? If God's word is to be its own interpreter, would we not rather be led to the conclusion that they spoke by course, one waiting until another had finished? (1 Cor. 14:27.)

Brother Whiteside evidently sees how laughably absurd it is to ask even the most fervid imagination to see a Sunday School in that great gathering of the Jews, so after failing to locate his pet in the synagogues of the Jews, and the great mass meeting of Ezra, he suddenly puts his finger right square on what he knows to be the first Sunday School that ever existed in the world's history, away down one hundred and fifty years this side of the death of Christ. That is, he knows this is so, if he believes his own witness, and surely, if he didn't, he wouldn't ask us to believe him, would he? His witness is the "American Cyclopedia", which says: "The earliest recorded Sunday Schools were the schools of Catechumens, organized, according to Tertullian, in A. D. 180, though less formal instruction of christian children and novitiates prevailed earlier. The schools of the Catechumens flourished until the sixth century."

Brother Whiteside adds, as an assertion of his own, "Under Roman Catholic rule, they fell into disuse." Again he gives no historical or other proof of his assertion, and again the presumption is that he could not do so and

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“deal honestly with the facts of history,” because history teaches us that these very schools of the Catechumens constituted one of the very first steps of the great apostasy which crystalized into the Roman Catholic Hierarchy. Let us see what these catechumens (Brother R. L. Whiteside’s chosen model) were. Chamber’s Encyclopedia says it was “The appellation given, in the early Christian Church, to those converted Jews and Heathens who had not yet received baptism, but were undergoing a course of training and instruction preparatory to it. They had a place assigned them in the congregation, but were not permitted to be present at the dispensation of the Lord’s supper. *In the apostolic age, converts appear to have been at once admitted to the sacraments; but afterwards this ceased to be the case, and a period of probation was required.*” (Italics mine.) Now what do you Bible-loving christians think of that? Brother Whiteside finds his authority, and model for his Sunday School, not in the acts or teachings of the apostles, but actually he wants us to walk in the footsteps of those who refused to follow the apostolic example of immediately baptizing those who believed and repented, but took “*converted (?) Jews and Heathens, who had not yet received baptism*” into the Sunday School on probation. It is hard to tell whether Brother Whiteside is trying to convulse us with laughter at his antics or horrify us with something that very nearly approaches blasphemy.

The catechumenical schools were neither more nor less than the confirmation classes which constituted the beginning of Roman Catholicism in A. D. 180, and have continued to this good day. And yet Brother Whiteside asks, “Are you with the Catholics of the Dark Ages in this

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controversy?" No! my brother, a thousand times no! You and the Catholics and your catechumens, and your Sunday Schools may all jog along the broad road that leadeth to destruction if you will, but as for us, we will serve the Lord in the good old way of New Testament precept and example. We refuse to take as our models *converted* Jews and Heathens who have not been baptized, but will take our children with us to the house of worship where God's overseers feed the entire flock, and where they will by constant example as well as precept, learn how God's people worship Him in spirit and in truth.

CHAPTER VII.

Having examined at some length those articles which constitute the ground and pillar of the Sunday School error, I will consider in a very brief manner the balance of the little pamphlet. Brother Ledlow, under the head of "Objections Considered," says: "Men who contend about little things do not realize the value of union, and the sin of division." Brother Ledlow, "Thou art the man," and "out of thine own mouth will I judge thee." You are the man who insists that the Sunday School question is a *little thing*, too small to be striven over, and yet you are openly and avowedly contending for it against those who consider it no little thing, but high-handed rebellion against God. Why not be consistent, and quit contending for this little thing, and if all who are joined with you in what you yourself denominate as "contentions that are

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worthless," will cease your striving, there will never be any more contention, strife, or division over this matter. Isn't it strange, and isn't it laughable, that when men discover that a thing is so infinitesimal that it is a sin to contend about, that they always mean the other fellow ought to quit his contention, and let them have everything their own way? Now all reasonable men will concede that if two men differ, and A thinks the matter too little and worthless to be contended over, while B regards it as a matter of conscience, and of very serious importance, A is the man to quit his striving over that which he acknowledges to be beneath contention. Now Brother Ledlow, we will expect you to practice what you preach, and every word you wrote after penning the first paragraph of your article was simply stultifying yourself.

Brother U. G. Wilkinson writes much that is irrelevant, and a great deal that is pointless on "What Law Includes and Excludes." The gist of which is that the "perfect law of liberty" *includes* nearly any device that uninspired wisdom may suggest, and *excludes* nothing that would interfere with the well beloved Sunday School. His whole argument seems to hinge on the sophistry that the law of teaching as exemplified in Matt. 28:19; Mark 16:15, 16; Acts 10:43; Luke 24:47; Acts 11:18; Acts 10:48 and 2:38 "requires that the essentials of the law be the same in each case, while the incidentals differ in every case." His corollary, of course, is that we must all (and always) teach the same *thing*, but are not bound to follow apostolic example as the *manner* of teaching, which is a mere incidental. Now wouldn't that choke a laughing hyena, when we recognize this old wolf argument, of the mission-

any society advocates, in the sheep's clothing of the Sunday School lawyers?

The manner in which the apostles carried out the commands of Jesus are not *incidents*, but are *essentials* of the most essential sort. Surely the apostles and those taught by them did not fail to put into practice, as well as preach, the command to bring up children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; and if they did this by organizing such a Sunday School as these brethren contend for, it would be the easiest thing in the world for them to show it. The best proof on earth that it isn't there is, that ten of the best posted men among us have failed to produce it.

Paul says: "Those things which ye have both learned, and received, and heard and seen in me do; and the God of peace shall be with you." (Phil. 4:9.) Whenever Brother U. G. Wilkinson, or any one else, shows us in the divine law where these things he is contending for were learned, received, heard and done by Paul or any other apostle, we will "*do*" it as Paul commands, and if he can not show us, he ought to quit practicing and defending it, for only thus can we enjoy that blessed promise, "and the God of peace shall be with you."

Brother J. W. Chism's allotment was "The Importance of Teaching," but he seemed so much more impressed with the *importance* of propping up the ramshackle work of his co-editors, that he devoted nearly all his space thereto, and succeeded in making their utter failure just a little more apparent than it was before. He begins with "Why We Should Teach," but nothing in the *why* indicates a need for a Sunday School. He then expatiates on "Whom We Should Teach," but there is no Sunday School

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in the *whom*, though Brother Chism makes a desperate attempt to squeeze it in. Next comes "What Shall Be Taught?" then "When Shall We Teach?" "Where Shall We Teach?" "How or By What Means Shall We Teach?" In all of which we have simply a rehash of the same tainted scraps already hashed up for us by the other writers, without a single new thought. He utterly fails to show anything in all God's word that even remotely resembles the institution he is contending for, so it were useless to waste time on his rambling and inconsequent flow of words—mere words.

Brother A. W. Young is assigned "The Value of Human Helps," and acquits himself remarkably well, if an utter misrepresentation of those who oppose him is the object he is seeking, or the elevation of uninspired comments to an equal rank with inspired writings.

If Brother Young values all the helps he can get (vocal, written or printed) as much as he tries to make us believe, he must strain his conscience awfully when he confines his Sunday School year in and year out to just one commentary (probably the McQuiddy brand), and has the lessons assigned, and the general arrangement outlined by the sectarian bunch who assume to dictate to the whole religious world in the matter of religious instruction, through their "international" lessons. These brethren ought to get a firm of sectarian theologians to arrange their sermon subjects for them for the entire year. If the sauce is good for the Sunday School goose, it ought to be equally so for the evangelistic gander.

Brother J. D. Tant takes the arena in defense of "Sunday School Literature." Reiteration and humorous blunders seem to be the forte of this cohort of writers. No

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matter what division of the question is assigned to each, each seems impressed with the weakness of their position on division into classes and literature, and hence each has to make a despairing though comic effort to prop these. In view of this fact, it is really refreshing to read the sound common sense of Brother Tant's summing up. To it I heartily say amen, and I just wonder how they ever came to admit into this pamphlet an article which so completely overthrows the very things they most earnestly contend for. I give his four conclusions verbatim et literatim.

"Our present system of going through the Bible every seven years and taking the same lessons all sectarians take, only putting our construction and comments on said lesson, is a failure."

"1. Out of the seven years study going through the Bible, five years of that time are spent on subjects that are of no practical benefit to any man, hence, too much time is lost."

"2. In the adopted course we pass the plan of salvation once in seven years, so a child can start in after we pass the plan and study six years and eleven months and never learn what to do to be saved."

"3. To leave our Bibles at home and depend upon the quarterly which often cuts a chapter in two, or drops one subject half developed and next Sunday takes up another, is a failure and senseless in any science."

"4. To go to church and study our quarterly fifteen minutes before the lesson period and then read the answers off the book is another failure; for Sunday School helps should be studied at home and left at home when you start to the Sunday School and your Bible only should be taken,

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and there not study but only recite the lessons with all the additional information you have gained from your quarterly during the week."

I wish to commend Brother Tant as having written the only sane, scriptural and logical thing in the book we are reviewing.

Brother Tant is mistaken, however, when he says, "All my brethren who believe in Sunday Schools, so believe and teach." Come back to Texas, Brother Tant, and go with me to the Sunday Schools at Dallas, Denton, Ft. Worth, and the other places where these co-workers of yours have their Sunday Schools in full blast, and I will show you all these four things, you so emphatically condemn. You are just mistaken in your crowd, that's all.

Brother Phillips just rambles over the same ground as the other writers, a little weaker, a little more drivelling perhaps, but practically a reprint of Brother Chism's effort. He gives us a great deal of assertion, and unwarranted inference, but fails as signally as the others to describe to us the Sunday Schools in which Paul, Peter, John, James, Timothy, Pricilla, Dorcas and others of the apostolic age were teachers.

Brother Phillips, being a man of superlative education (apparently) naturally feels a distaste for ignorant and illiterate company. Perhaps this feeling has more weight with him than his desire to be in harmony with apostolic example, for he says: "The majority of brethren who oppose literature in the Bible study are illiterate people." When I remember that the apostles were mostly illiterate men, I can understand why Brother Phillips seems to be ashamed to be found in their company upon this issue. Perhaps, Brother Phillips, God has hidden these things

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from the wise and prudent, and has revealed them to the illiterate who have sought for example and precept in the word of God for all they do.

Brother Phillips says, "I would be ashamed of myself to offer any defense of the modern Sunday School." Well, since Brother Phillips and the other nine have failed to point us to that *ancient* Sunday School, instituted by the apostles, I may take it for granted that he now sits with bowed head, overwhelmed with shame for his part in this little pamphlet. We now call for mourners, to see if some of the other nine are not ashamed too. "Were there not ten cleansed? Where are the nine?"

Brother Price Billingsly gives us the "Conclusion of the Whole Matter," which turns out to be about the most inconclusive statement that could well have been written, but eminently in keeping with the unscriptural and illogical productions of his confreres. Brother Billingsly avowedly plants himself on digressive ground, thus: "No man is at liberty to make a law out of an incidental, and call those who do differently, innovators. Is it said that this is just the argument the digressives make in favor of their unscriptural work? Just so. But is this reason why the argument should be rejected? It is true argument here; it is false argument with them." In attempting to prove this, Brother Billingsly says: "In the matter of teaching and preaching, the Bible makes it plain what shall be taught to the world. It is the gospel. But the method to be pursued in its impartation is not therein specified." Now to bring the illustration right home in a manner to leave Brother Billingsly without any loophole for escape, we will just apply his own logic, strictly within his own limitations. We are to preach and teach, but are not re-

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stricted as to the method of either. We have then the same liberty of method in preaching to adults as in teaching children. Then, it follows that if I decide that Brother Billingsly's method of teaching children is the best, I may preach to adults by the same method, with Brother Billingsly's full approval.

This would be eminently reasonable, since I have already shown (and no man can successfully deny), that there are as many grades of intelligence, knowledge and capability among grown people as among children. Therefore, if I do the work of an evangelist, by dividing my congregations of adults into classes (as Brother Billingsly does the children), having as many separate preachers to address each separate class in the same room, at the same time, on the same subject (just as he teaches the children), Brother Billingsly will heartily approve and say I am no innovator, will he? Well I guess hardly. In spite of the fact that his own words would condemn him for so doing, I would rather expect him to be one of the first to denounce me, and call for my example or precept for so doing, and then every other one of the ten would jump on me at once. Verily, verily, the legs of the lame are not equal, and this is the worst bunch of cripples I ever encountered. My prayer is that they may not lead astray those who are clean escaped from them who live in error, and make the last state of that man worse than at the beginning.

And now, by way of conclusion, let me say that I sincerely love these brethren, and if I have rebuked them sharply, and exposed the absurdity of their claims in the nakedness of their deformity, it has been with the loving desire of opening their eyes to the pit which lies at the

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end of the path they are treading, and with the hope of getting them to turn from a way that can only lead to open rebellion against the Lord. Let us all walk as we have the apostles for our example, asking at each step, "What hath the Lord answered and what hath the Lord spoken?"

G. A. TROTT.

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